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(74) Agents: COLOMBET, Alain et al.; Cabinet Lavoix, 2, Place d'Estienne d'Orves, F-75441 Paris Cedex 09 (FR).

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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA SANTE ET DE LA RECHERCHE MEDICALE (INSERM) [FR/FR]; 101, Rue de Tolbiac, F-75013 Paris (FR).

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(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): DURANTEL, David [FR/FR]; 26, rue Bonnand, F-69003 Lyon (FR). DURANTEL, Sandra [FR/FR]; 26, rue Bonnand, F-69003 Lyon (FR). TREPO, Christian [FR/FR]; 4, Passage du Verdier Sud, F-69500 Bron (FR). ZOULIM, Fabien [FR/FR]; 5, rue du Paillet, F-69570 Dardilly (FR).

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(54) Title: METHOD FOR ASSAYING REPLICATION OF HBV AND TESTING SUSCEPTIBILITY TO DRUGS

(57) Abstract: A method for measuring the replication capacity of HBV, e.g. HBV present in a biological sample, possibly in the presence of a pharmaceutical product, in particular an antiviral agent, the method comprising: (a) possibly extracting nucleic acids contained in the biological sample; (b) PCR amplifying HBV nucleic acids using at least two primer pairs selected so as to obtain at least two different amplified HBV genomic fragments which upon assembly represent a linear continuous DNA sequence transcriptable in pgRNA; (c) cloning the fragments obtained under (b) into a vector under the control of an heterologous promoter, so producing a vector containing a linear continuous DNA sequence transcriptable in pgRNA under control of said promoter; (d) transfecting or transducing susceptible cells with the vector; (e) culturing the transfected or transduced cells in conditions allowing synthesis of HBV pgRNA from the cloned HBV DNA; (f) possibly treating the cultured cells with the pharmaceutical product, in particular antiviral agent; and (g) determining the replication capacity of the HBV, possibly incidence of the pharmaceutical product, preferably antiviral agent, on viral gene expression and/or viral replication.